

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a current listing of claims and will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please amend the claims as follows:

1-53. (Canceled)

54. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

sending, via a public network, information identifying a plurality of business entities to an information ~~sharing~~ distribution service, wherein said information is sent by a first user ~~of~~ accessing said information distribution service using a first account, and wherein said information is usable by the information distribution service to associate said plurality of business entities with said first user, wherein said associating permits the plurality of business entities to provide content that is accessible to the first user via the first account of the information distribution service;

said first user providing ~~first personal information and~~ sharing control information to said service via said public network, wherein said sharing control information specifies other users of said service that are permitted to access ~~said first~~ specified personal information of said first user;

~~subsequent to said sending, said first user conveying sending, via said public network,~~ a request ~~for to~~ access to said first account of said information ~~sharing~~ distribution service via said public network;

in response to said request being validated by the service[[,]]:

automatically receiving information ~~that is usable to generate a graphical interface,~~ wherein said information is received from said information distribution service via said public network, wherein the received information includes content from at least two of the plurality of business entities, wherein the received content includes personal, non-public content that relates to the first user and is not provided by the business entities to other users of the service, wherein the received content from each of the at least two business entities includes an associated time value, and wherein the received content from each of the at least two business entities was selected by the service to be made accessible to the first user upon the request being validated,

the selection based on the associated time value satisfying one or more time-based criteria specified by the service;

automatically displaying ~~said~~ a graphical interface, wherein said graphical interface includes a view that includes, for each of the ~~content from~~ at least two business entities ~~of said plurality of business entities~~, at least an indication of the content received from that business entity wherein said content includes second personal information relating to said first user.

55. (Currently Amended) A computer system, comprising:

one or more servers configured to:

associate a plurality of business entities with a first user of an information distribution service, permitting the plurality of businesses to push content to the first user via the service;

~~receive requests to access an information sharing service, wherein said requests are received from a plurality of business entities, wherein the plurality of business entities have been associated with said first user via said service in response to information specified by said first user;~~

receive, via said service, content from at least two of said plurality of business entities, ~~wherein said content includes first personal information relating to said first user~~ wherein said received content from each of the at least two business entities includes personal, non-public information relating to the first user and has an associated value indicative of a time-based priority of that content;

store said received content in a database accessible to said one or more servers;

select content from the stored content having an associated value satisfying one or more time-based criteria specified by the service, wherein said selected content includes first and second pieces of content;

receive a request from said first user to log on to said service;

in response to said first user logging on to said service, automatically provide a graphical user interface to said first user, wherein said graphical user interface concurrently displays at least ~~a portion~~ an indication of said first and second pieces of content ~~received from said plurality of businesses;~~

wherein said first and second pieces of content are not provided to other users of the information distribution service by the first and second business entities, respectively.

~~receive, from said first user, second personal information relating to said first user;~~

~~receive sharing control information from said first user, wherein said sharing control information specifies other users of said service that are permitted to access personal information of said first user; and~~

~~share personal information of said first user according to said sharing control information.~~

56. (Currently Amended) A system configured to provide an information ~~sharing~~ distribution service, said system comprising:

a memory subsystem;

one or more application servers configured to receive, via secure links to said service, messages ~~pieces of content~~ including personal information relating to users of said service, wherein said users include a first user, wherein at least some of said messages ~~pieces of content~~ are received from a plurality of business entities;

wherein the received ~~pieces of content~~ messages include first and second messages ~~pieces of content~~, wherein the first and second messages ~~pieces of content~~ each include personal, non-public information relating to said first user and each include an indication of a time-based priority of the message, wherein the first message ~~piece of content~~ is received from a first business entity, wherein the second message ~~piece of content~~ is received from a second business entity~~[[,]]~~; ~~and~~

wherein said first and second business entities have been associated with said first user via said service, ~~in response to information provided by said first user~~, permitting said first and second business entities to provide, via said service, ~~content~~ messages to said first user that include~~[[s]]~~ personal information relating to said first user;

wherein said one or more application servers are configured to store the received messages ~~pieces content~~ in said memory subsystem, including the first and second messages;

wherein the one or more application servers are configured to generate a report for the first user by selecting the stored messages directed to the first user that satisfy one or more time-based criteria, wherein the report for the first user includes at least an indication of the first and second messages;

wherein the one or more application servers are configured to store the report for the first user.

~~wherein the one or more application servers are further configured to access the memory subsystem to access the received pieces of content including the first and second pieces of content, generate a report including at least the first and second pieces of content, store said report in said memory subsystem, and make the stored report available to the first user via said service.~~

57. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 56, wherein the one or more application servers are configured to make the stored report available to the first user by conveying the stored report for display to the first user.
58. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 56, wherein said system is configured to convey said report in response to said first user logging on to said service.
59. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 56, wherein said system is configured to convey the report to the first user ~~is conveyed~~ over a wireless network.
60. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 56, wherein said system is configured to convey the report to the first user ~~is conveyed~~ over a television network.
61. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 56, wherein said system is configured to convey the report to the first user ~~is conveyed~~ over a secure link.
62. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 56, wherein said system is web-based, wherein said system further comprises a web server coupled to at least one of said one or more application servers, wherein the web server is configured to convey said report to said first user ~~in~~ via one or more web pages.
63. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 62, wherein said web server and said at least one application server are configured to generate said one or more web pages using at least said first and second messages ~~pieces of content~~.
64. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 56, wherein said system is further configured to include additional content as part of said report for the first user, wherein said additional content ~~[[is]]~~ includes public information generated by said one or more application servers based upon user profile information received from said first user.
65. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 64, wherein said additional content included~~[[s]]~~ in the report for the first user includes ~~one or more types of the following types of content:~~ weather information based on location information specified by said first user to the service, ~~information on a sports franchise specified by said first user.~~

66. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 56, wherein said one or more application servers are further configured to permit sharing of personal information of said first user with one or more designated users of said service, wherein said system is configured to permit said sharing based at least in part upon sharing control information provided to said service by said first user.

67. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 66, wherein said sharing control information includes information identifying said one or more designated users and information identifying ~~said~~ personal information of said first user to be shared.

68. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 56, wherein said system is further configured to receive ~~first~~ information from said first user indicating that the first and second business entities are to be associated with the first user via the service, ~~wherein the first information specifies at least the first and second business entities, wherein the first information is usable by said system to associate at least the first and second business entities with said first user.~~

69. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 56, wherein said plurality of business entities include one or more types of entities from the following types: manufacturers, retailers, government agencies, nonprofit entities, sports franchises.

70. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 56, wherein said first message ~~pieces of content~~ includes one or more types of content ~~from the following types of content~~: information relating to a prescription of said first user, service information for an automobile of said first user, information relating to a particular product purchased by said first user, information for a travel reservation of said first user, voicemail messages for said first user.

71. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 56, wherein at least one of said one or more application servers is further configured to receive voting information from said first user.

72. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~[[56]]~~71, wherein at least one of said one or more application servers is further configured to receive questions from said first user and to send said received questions to other users of said service.

73. (Currently Amended) A computer-based method for providing an information ~~sharing~~ distribution service, said method comprising:

receiving, via secure links to said service, messages ~~pieces of content~~ including personal information relating to users of said service, wherein said users include a first user, wherein said messages ~~pieces of content~~ are received from a plurality of business entities, wherein the received messages ~~pieces of content~~ include first and second messages ~~pieces of content~~, wherein the first and second messages ~~pieces of content~~ each include personal, non-public information relating to said first user and an indication of a time-based priority of the message, wherein the first message ~~piece of content~~ is received from a first business entity, wherein the second message ~~piece of content~~ is received from a second business entity, wherein said first and second business entities have been associated with said first user via said service, ~~in response to information provided by said first user~~, permitting said first and second business entities to provide, via said service, messages ~~content~~ to said first user that include[[s]] personal information relating to said first user;

storing said received messages ~~pieces of content~~ ~~in a memory subsystem~~;

generating a report for the first user, wherein said generating includes selecting ~~including~~ at least the first and second messages for inclusion in the report based on the time-based priority of those messages satisfying one or more time-based criteria specified by the service, ~~pieces of content by accessing the memory subsystem~~;

storing the report for the first user ~~in the memory subsystem~~;

making the report available to the first user via said service using a first interface.

74. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 73, wherein said making the stored report available to the first user includes conveying the stored report for display to the first user.

75. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 74, wherein said conveying is performed in response to said first user logging in to said service.

76. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 73, further comprising including additional content as part of said report, wherein said additional content is generated based at least in part

upon user profile information provided by said first user to said service, wherein said additional content is not private content relative to the first user.

77. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 76, wherein said additional content includes ~~one or more types of the following types of content:~~ weather information based on location information specified by said first user; ~~information on a sports franchise specified by said first user.~~

78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73, further comprising:
receiving sharing control information from said first user, wherein said sharing control information identifies one or more other users of said service; and
permitting said other users to access personal information of said first user in response to said receiving said sharing control information.

79. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 78, wherein said sharing control information further identifies ~~said~~ personal information of said first user to be shared with said other users.

80. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73, wherein said first plurality of business entities includes one or more types of the following types of entities: manufacturers, retailers, government agencies, nonprofit entities, sports franchises.

81. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 73, wherein said ~~content~~ first message includes one ~~or more types~~ of the following types of content: information relating to a prescription of said first user, service information for an automobile of said first user, information relating to a particular product purchased by said first user, information for a travel reservation of said first user, voicemail messages for said first user.

82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73, further comprising receiving voting information from said first user.

83. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[73]]~~82, further comprising receiving questions from said first user and sending said received questions to other users of said service.

84. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising program instructions executable by a computer to:

receive, via secure links to ~~said~~ an information distribution service, ~~pieces of content~~ messages including personal information relating to users of said service, wherein said users include a first user, wherein said messages ~~pieces of content~~ are received from a plurality of business entities, wherein the received messages ~~pieces of content~~ include first and second messages ~~pieces of content~~, wherein the first and second messages ~~pieces of content~~ each include personal, private information relating to said first user and each include an indication of a time-based priority of the message, wherein the first message ~~piece of content~~ is received from a first business entity, wherein the second message ~~piece of content~~ is received from a second business entity, wherein said first and second business entities have been associated with said first user via said service, ~~in response to information provided by said first user~~, permitting said first and second business entities to provide, via said service, ~~content~~ messages to said first user that includes personal information relating to said first user;

store said received messages ~~pieces of content~~ in a memory subsystem;

generate a report ~~including~~ for the first user, wherein generating the report includes selecting at least the first and second messages for inclusion in the report based on the time-based priorities of those messages satisfying one or more time-based criteria specified by the service ~~pieces of content by accessing the memory subsystem~~; and

~~store the report in the memory subsystem~~; and

make the report available to the first user via said service using a first interface.

85. (New) A method, comprising:

a first user of an information distribution service receiving, from the service over a data channel that includes the Internet, a first plurality of messages;

responsive to said receiving, providing at least an indication of each of the plurality of messages to the first user via a first interface;

wherein each of the first plurality of messages was sent to the service over a respective data channel that includes the Internet by one of a plurality of business entities;

wherein each of the plurality of business entities is associated with the first user and is permitted by the service to provide messages to the first user;

wherein each of the first plurality of messages includes personal, non-public content that is related to the first user and that is not provided by the originating business entity to other users of the service;

wherein each of the first plurality of messages has an associated time value indicative of a time-based priority of the message, and wherein each of the first plurality of messages was selected for delivery to the first user based on its associated time value satisfying one or more time-based criteria specified by the information distribution service.

86. (New) The method of claim 85, further comprising specifying sharing control information to the service that indicates 1) one or more other users of the service and 2) one or more types of information relating to the first user that is stored by the service;

wherein the specified sharing control information permits the one or more types of information relating to the first user to be shared with the one or more other users of the service.

87. (New) The method of claim 86, further comprising using the service to make a query to one or more other users of the service.

88. (New) The method of claim 87, further comprising joining a first group that includes one or more other users of the service.

89. (New) The method of claim 88, further comprising sending a message to a second user of the service.

90. (New) The method of claim 89, wherein the message is an instant message.
91. (New) The method of claim 88, further comprising sending a message to all members of the first group.
92. (New) The method of claim 88, further comprising participating in decision making of the first group by voting via the service.
93. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein the first interface is a web interface or an interactive voice response system.
94. (New) The method of claim 93, wherein said receiving is performed wirelessly.
95. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein the first plurality of messages includes a first message that is a text-based message.
96. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein the first plurality of messages includes a first message that includes audio and video.
97. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein the first plurality of messages includes a first message that includes prescription information for the first user.
98. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein further comprising the first user also receiving, from the service, a second plurality of messages having content personalized to the first user based on a user profile submitted to the service by the first user, wherein the second plurality of messages do not private information of the first user.
99. (New) The method of claim 98, wherein the second plurality of messages includes a second message having weather information corresponding to a location designated by the first user.
100. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein the first plurality of messages is provided to the first user via a graphical interface, wherein the graphical interface, at a first point in time, includes at least an indication of each of the first plurality of messages.

101. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the graphical interface displays more content relating to a first of the first plurality of messages in response to the first user selecting an indication of that message.

102. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein the first plurality of messages includes a first message whose associated time value indicates the current day on which the first message is received by the service, and wherein the one or more time-based criteria specified by the service is whether a given message has an associated time value that corresponds to the current day.

103. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein said first plurality of messages are received while the first user is logged on to the information distribution service, and are provided to the first user substantially upon being received.

104. (New) A method, comprising:

storing, at a computer system associated with an information distribution service, information specifying that a plurality of business entities are permitted to push personalized content to a first user of the service;

receiving, at the computer system, personalized content from at least two of plurality of business entities, wherein the received content includes personal, non-public information that relates to the first user and that is unique to the first user relative to other users of the service, wherein the content received from each of the at least two business entities has an associated time value indicative of a time-based priority of the content;

the computer system automatically selecting, from the received content, content whose associated time value satisfies one or more time-based criteria specified by the service;

substantially upon receiving, automatically pushing the selected content to the first user via a first interface.

105. (New) The method of claim 104, further comprising receiving user profile information specified by the first user.

106. (New) The method of claim 105, further comprising providing cumulative aggregate user profile information that is based in part upon the first user's user profile information to one or more business entities.

107. (New) The method of claim 105, further comprising receiving sharing control information from the first user, wherein the sharing control information specifies information of the first user that is stored by the service that can be shared, and wherein the sharing control information further specifies one or more users of the service with whom the specified information can be shared.

108. (New) The method of claim 107, further comprising facilitating sharing information of the first user based on the received sharing control information.

109. (New) The method of claim 108, further comprising storing information defining groups of users of the service.

110. (New) The method of claim 109, further comprising facilitating voting by members of a first group defined via the service, wherein the first group has at least two users of the service as members.

111. (New) The method of claim 108, further comprising providing additional content to the first user that is personalized to the first user based on user profile information received from the first user, wherein the additional content is not private information of the first user.

112. (New) The method of claim 54, wherein the service permits providing, to the first user, information from one or more groups of users defined via the service, information from the first user's family members and/or friends, and customer service information requested by the first user.

113. (New) The method of claim 112, wherein the service facilitates voting by users of the service.

114. (New) The method of claim 113, wherein the service maintains a calendar, address book, and a to-do list for users of the service.

115. (New) The system of claim 55, wherein the service permits providing, to the first user, information from one or more groups of users defined via the service, information from the first user's family members and/or friends, and customer service information requested by the first user.

116. (New) The system of claim 115, wherein the service facilitates voting by users of the service.

117. (New) The system of claim 116, wherein the service maintains a calendar, address book, and a to-do list for user of the service.

118. (New) The system of claim 56, wherein the service permits providing, to the first user, information from one or more groups of users defined via the service, information from the first user's family members and/or friends, and customer service information requested by the first user.

119. (New) The system of claim 118, wherein the service facilitates voting by users of the service.

120. (New) The system of claim 119, wherein the service maintains a calendar, address book, and a to-do list for user of the service.

121. (New) The method of claim 73, wherein the service permits providing, to the first user, information from one or more groups of users defined via the service, information from the first user's family members and/or friends, and customer service information requested by the first user.

122. (New) The method of claim 121, wherein the service facilitates voting by users of the service.

123. (New) The method of claim 122, wherein the service maintains a calendar, address book, and a to-do list for users of the service.

124. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 84, wherein the service permits providing, to the first user, information from one or more groups of users defined via the service, information from the first user's family members and/or friends, and customer service information requested by the first user.

125. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 124, wherein the service facilitates voting by users of the service.

126. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 125, wherein the service maintains a calendar, address book, and a to-do list for users of the service.

127. (New) The method of claim 85, wherein the service permits providing, to the first user, information from one or more groups of users defined via the service, information from the first user's family members and/or friends, and customer service information requested by the first user.

128. (New) The method of claim 127, wherein the service facilitates voting by users of the service.

129. (New) The method of claim 129, wherein the service maintains a calendar, address book, and a to-do list for users of the service.

130. (New) The method of claim 104, wherein the service permits providing, to the first user, information from one or more groups of users defined via the service, information from the first user's family members and/or friends, and customer service information requested by the first user.

131. (New) The method of claim 130, wherein the service facilitates voting by users of the service.

132. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the service maintains a calendar, address book, and a to-do list for users of the service.